

LVII. *Extraëts of some Letters from Signor Abbate de Venuti, F. R. S. to J. Nixon, A. M. and F. R. S. relating to several Antiquities in Italy.*

Dear Sir,

Rome, Sept. 27, 1759.

Read March 20, 1760. — **S**OME days ago a fire accidentally broke out, where the Antonine column lay, near the Curia Innocenziana on Monte Citorio. It burnt the wooden props or scaffolding, which supported the column, and did such considerable damage to the column itself, by causing its surface to shell off, that it will be very difficult to set it up, if any attempt should be made for that purpose hereafter.

A certain Greek epigram, lately dug up at Naples, relating to a boy, has occasioned several grammatical altercations among the literati in that part of the world; and these again have produced some smart lampoons and satirical writings on each side of the question.

Many singular statues and relievos, lately discovered, have been set up in the gardens of Cardinal Albani, without the Porta Salaria. These, if you were among us, would afford a very agreeable entertainment to your curiosity.

LETTER

## L E T T E R II.

Rome, Dec. 31, 1759.

—I have already met with some dissertations of Mr. Swinton, which shew his acute judgment, and excellent learning in the oriental languages; and therefore, I do not question his accuracy in treating of the epocha of the Sidonians. Your extract of his essay upon that subject has induced me to examine some coins stamp'd at Sidon, which I think it needless to describe, as the world is already in possession of their history. However, I have taken particular notice of one of that kind, of the smallest size, which, I think, has never been published. It exhibits the trunk of a palm-tree, or rather the *laferiptium* of Cyrene, with this legend, *ΑΓΙΝΕ*. On the reverse, there is a caldron, or vase, with these letters round it, *ΠΥΛΙΣΧΛΥΣ*. If Mr. Swinton thinks this coin will be of any service to him in his inquiry, I will send a more exact copy of it.

I come now (in compliance with your request) to give you some inscriptions lately dug up among the ruins of antient Rome.

The first was discovered without the Porta Latina, two miles from the city, and runs thus:

LIBERTI. LIBERTAE  
PRISCI. AVG. L. GAMIANI  
EX. TESTAMENTO. DESCRIPTV. ITA. VT  
CAVTVM. ERAT. SVBSCIPER  
LOCVS. MONIMENTI. SIVE. AGER. EST. VIA. LATIN  
AD. MILLIARIVM. V. SVpra. PONTEM. AD  
MONIMENTVM. GAMI. CAESARIS. AGATHOCLIAN

DO. LEGO. LIBERTIS. MEIS. VTRIVSQVE. SEXSVS  
 POSTERISQVE. EORVM. ET. IIS. QVOS. MANV  
 MITTI. ROGAVI. IBIQVE. TABERNAM. FIERI.  
 INQVE. EAM. REM. CONSVMI. HS. N̄.  
 ARBITRATV. AGATHANGELI. COLLIB.

II.

The second is in my possession; and is as follows:

D. M.  
 SOTER. SERVOS. PVBLICVS.  
 CASTELLAR. AQVAE. ANNIONIS  
 VETERIS. FECIT. CONGVGI. BENE  
 MERENTI. ET. L. CALPVARNIVS  
 FLAVIANVS. MATRI. BENE  
 MERENTI. SIBI. ET. SVIS  
 POSTERISQVE. EORVM.

III.

On a Hermes, without a head

D. M. V. F.  
 SEX. SAMNIVS  
 SEX. F. VVLTVR  
 APER.  
 DOMO. NEMAVSO  
 IIIIVIR. IVREDICVND  
 PONTIFEX. PVBLICORV  
 SACRIFICIORVM  
 PRAEFECTVS. VIGILVM  
 ET. ARMORVM.

IV.

On the basis of a statue dressed in a toga, are the following letters:

EVENTIVS  
 P. D. S. C.

I have

I have lately bought a relievo, which, in my opinion, is very singular. It is of marble, two palms wide, and one high, and represents, in a neat taste, a Faun, with a tail, and wings; which latter circumstance has never occurred to my observation before. He seems to be dancing, and his dog at his feet is in the same attitude. Near him is a tree, to which is tied a very elegant open chariot, (*thenfa*) and beneath it there appears a table, such as are used in entertainments, with a goblet upon it, charged with relievo in embossed work.

I have likewise, a few days ago, met with a cornelian, on which was engraved a man cloathed with a pallium, and sitting on a chair: before him there appeared a lighted furnace, and upon it a vessel of glass, or earthen ware. The artist himself held in his hand a pair of iron pincers, with handles, to take off the vessel from the fire, without burning himself. They demanded ten sequins for it, which I thought too great a price, and therefore did not purchase it.

*Remarks on the preceding Extracts; in a Letter to Charles Morton, M. D. Secretary to the Royal Society: By John Nixon, A. M. F. R. S.*

Dear Sir,

Read March 27, 1760. **I** Beg leave, in pursuance of my promise, to transmit to you some observations, which tend, in my opinion, to illustrate the preceding extracts of the Abbate de Venuti's letters to me.

The

The column, mentioned in Letter I. is of red granite, and was dug up (together with its pedestal) by Clement XI. out of the ruins on Monte Citorio, A. D. 1705. Innocent XII. intended to have set it up; but the great damage it had suffered in clearing the rubbish from it, hindered that design from being effected.

In 1745, Benedict XIV. removed it from the Piazza di Monte Citorio to its present situation on the same hill, and also caused the pedestal, that belonged to it, to be erected where it now stands, being the spot designed for it by his predecessors, mentioned above.

The relievi on the sides of the pedestal refer to the apotheosis of Antoninus Pius; as the inscription shews, that the column was erected to the memory of that emperor by M. Aurelius (stiled in this, as in some other antient monuments \*, Antoninus) and L. Verus, his adopted sons, and associates in the government.

Letter II. inscript. 2. l. 2.—SERVOS. PVBLICVS.]  
i. e. One of those officers, who were to attest the signing of all public instruments—*Censores ex templo jam atrium libertatis ascenderunt, et ibi signatis tabellis publicis, clausoque tabulario, et dimissis servis publicis, negarunt se prius quidquam negotii publici gesturos, quam iudicium populi de se factum esset.* Liv. Hist. l. xliii. c. 16. A. U. 584. Vid. Marcell. Donat. in loc.

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\* Vid. Bianchini apud Vasi delle Magnif. di Roma, lib. ii. p. 13, 14.

L. 3.—CASTELLAR.] For explaining this title, it is to be observed, that the reservoirs, which received the waters brought by aqueducts into the city of Rome, were called *castella*.

*Agrippa in ædilitate suâ adjecitâ virgine aquâ, cæteris corrivatis atque emendatis, lacus septingentos fecit: præterea salientes centum quinque; CASTELLA centum triginta, complura etiam cultu magnifica.* Plin. Hist. Nat. l. xxxvi. c. 15.

There are still extant very considerable remains of some of these *castella*, viz. that of Aqua Claudia at Porta Maggiore; and another of Aqua Marcia, commonly called I Trofei di Mario, near S<sup>to</sup> Eusebio in Rome.

From hence it is obvious to collect, that the office of the *castellarius* was to superintend the public reservoirs above-mentioned, to distribute the waters in due proportion into the several quarters of the city, &c. Fabretti has preserved an inscription, relating to one of these officers, viz. the *castellarius* of the Aqua Marcia. *Vid. Bianchini apud Vasi delle Magnif. di Roma, lib. i. p. 31.*

*Ib.* L. 3.—AQVAE. ANNIONIS. VETERIS.] This water was brought to Rome A. U. 481. It was taken up from the Anio, or Teverone, above Tibur, (Tivoli) about twenty miles from Rome, and entered the city by the same aqueduct, which conveyed the Aqua Appia, near the Porta Capena (S<sup>to</sup> Sebastiano). From thence it passed along between M. Aventinus and Cælius, to the end of the Vicus Publicius, near the modern Scola Greca, where it had its reservoir contiguous to that of the Aqua Appia above-

above-mentioned. *M. Angel. Rossi Roma Antica*, p. 229. 231.

The epithet *vetus* distinguishes this water from that of the *Anio novus*, which was brought to Rome from the distance of sixty-two miles, by the emperor Claudius, in the twelfth year of his reign, about *A. U.* 803, as appears from an inscription in Vasi, lib. i. p. 32. To which we may add the testimony of Suetonius—(*Claudius*) *Rivum Anienis novi lapideo opere in urbem perduxit, divisitque in plurimos et ornatissimos lacus.* Suet. Claud. c. xx.

Inscript. 3. l. 7, 8.—PONTIFEX. PVBLICORV. SACRIFICIORVM.] If this title implies the same as that of the *Sacerdotes Publici* in Livy, it comprehended the several orders of Pontifex Maximus, Pontifex, Augur, Decemvir Sacrorum, &c. Liv. Hist. lib. xxv. c. 2. xxvi. 23. xli. 21, &c. But to which of these classes SAMNIVS, mentioned in this inscription, belonged, we cannot determine.

*Ib.* l. 9.—PRAEFECTVS. VIGILVM.] Some writers refer the first institution of a night-watch, for the safeguard of the city of Rome from fires, to Augustus. *Augustus adversus incendia excubias nocturnas, vigilesque commentus est.* Suet. Aug. c. xxx. Ἐπειδὴ ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ τῆτα, &c. *Cum eo tempore multa essent in urbe incendiis vastata, libertinos septem locis ad ea curanda instituit (Augustus).* Dion. Cass. l. lv. *A. U.* 759. But Livy mentions an office subsisting in Rome, in the time of the republic, as early as *A. U.* 449, viz. the *Triumviratus nocturnus*, (Liv. Hist. lib. ix. c. 46.) which must have been the same

same in effect with that described above: for it must have been undoubtedly the province of those Triumviri to prevent all manner of disorders and accidents in the night, especially that most calamitous one of fires. This conclusion, in general, results from the nature of things; as the particular circumstance relating to fires may be collected from Tacitus. — *Triumviri, quòd ad incendium in sacrâ viâ ortum tarde venerant, à tribuno plebis die dictâ damnati.* [Tac. apud Godeler. not. in Liv. supra.] Now, in order to reconcile these accounts, in some degree, we may say, that, as the inhabitants of Rome were become more numerous and wealthy, and (consequently) more licentious, in Augustus's time, that emperor found it requisite to new model the night-watch, by making several additional improvements in it, with regard, probably, to the number and condition of the persons, of whom it consisted; the quality of the officer, who presided over it; the appointment of the proper places of rendezvous in the most commodious parts of the city, &c. And, upon account of these regulations made by Augustus in the night-watch, some historians may have been induced to consider him as the founder of this police in the city of Rome.

I am, &c.

J. Nixon.